

An Analysis of the Career Path of Female Teachers in the Double First-Class Universities and Colleges -- Taking a University in Western Part of China as an Example

Xiaohui Zhang

School of Ethnology and Sociology Inner Mongolia University, Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, 010020, China

bottletlady@163.com

Keywords: Female Teachers of the Double First-Class Universities; Career Development; Social Action Theory

Abstract: In recent years, the proportion of female teachers in universities and colleges has been increasing constantly. The concern to the career development of female teachers in universities and colleges is conducive to the understanding of objective predicament in the career development of female teachers in universities and colleges and improving their professional adaptability. This paper focuses on the factors that influence the career development of female teachers in the double-first-class universities and colleges, and discusses the career positioning and development path of female teachers in universities and colleges.

1. Raising of Questions

According to statistics from the Ministry of Education in 2013, the number of full-time female teachers in ordinary colleges and universities in our country accounted for 47.28%, the proportion of the total number of male and female teachers is 1.16:1. From the perspective of scale, the number of female teachers almost occupied the half of teachers of universities and colleges. Taking the statistics of certain university where the author had studied, female teachers constitute half of all teachers with upward development. According to statistics in 2015, the total number of teachers reached 1,355, among which 747 teachers were male and 608 females accounting for 44.87 percent. Therefore, from the perspective of growth in scale, the growth rate of female teachers tends to exceed that of male teachers. However, from the perspective of gender ratio of the composition of occupational status, female teachers in colleges and universities were at a relative inferior position compared with male teachers. According to the statistics of the Ministry of Education in 2013, female teachers accounted for 28.42% of teachers with senior professional titles, and the ratio of male to female professors was 2.52 : 1. Female teachers with associate senior professional titles accounted for 43.58% of teachers, and the ratio of male to female associate professors was 1.29:1. Female teachers with intermediate and junior titles accounted for 52.77% of all teachers. Female teachers accounted for 28.13% of master mentors and 14.57% in doctoral mentors. Female teachers have almost accounted for half of the total number of college teachers in China. The essence of the competition among higher education of all countries is the competition among teachers to a certain extent. Therefore, it can be said that the overall development of college teachers in China depends, to a certain extent, on the development and comprehensive quality of female teachers.

2. A Comparative Study on the Career Development of Female Teachers in Colleges and Universities

2.1 Authoritarian Perspective

Authority, as clearly pointed by Dennis, "is embedded in all human relations and social structures". The status quo of female teachers in colleges and universities is demonstrated by the

proportion of women as middle and senior managers, senior professionals, leaders of advanced subjects and famous teachers. Nationally, female professors accounted for 25.6 percent, women doctors 25.6 percent and female doctoral supervisors accounted for 12.8 percent of total number of teachers. [1] In 2007, the research group with research on quality of presidents of Chinese Universities of Renmin University of China investigated the presidents from 1,792 universities and colleges and the results showed that female presidents accounted for 4.5% of the university presidents [2].

2.2 From the Perspective of Gender in the Society

The social roles and destinies of females are not determined by physiology, but the product of social activism in some forms. How do social members learn and accept their social roles and social status under the influence of social culture, and become a person with social gender? Liu Yueping and Guo Shumei analyzed the career development of female teachers in universities and colleges in perspective of social gender and revealed that gender neutrality was prevalent in college organizations and implicit gender discrimination existed [3]. According to the statistics from the Ministry of Education in 2013, female teachers account for 47.28% of the full-time teachers in ordinary colleges and universities in China. In terms of scale, female teachers accounted for almost half of the teachers in colleges and universities.

2.3 From the Perspective of Ecologism

The construction of cooperative team consisted of female teachers and continuous development in universities and colleges has become a popular topic. The respect for difference and advocating diversified development and relationship between man and nature are integral parts of ecologism, which provided a concept of co-existence of multi-factors, focus on difference and harmonious coexistence. As a result, it was embraced by people in the background that equality was respected and authority should be deconstructed and other mainstream idealism. From the perspective of ecologism, Li Omei et al. objectively analyzed the restrictive nature of the development of female teachers in universities, the diversified ways of self-realization and the independent selectivity for cooperative development, and put forward some measures and suggestions for the construction of a cooperative team composing of female teachers in universities.[4]

2.4 The Perspective of Humanism

From the perspective of humanism, the research on female teachers in colleges and universities mainly was conducted with focuses on the quality of life, career satisfaction and mental health, emphasizing the social feelings of female teachers in colleges and universities. For example, study on job burnout of female teachers by Gou Yachun, study on job satisfaction and mental health of female teachers by Tian Minlan, study on conflict between the family and job and social support of female teachers in colleges and universities by Liu Ling as well as the study on subjective well-being by Wang Chen, etc. Empirical research was conducted by Deng Zijuan for 268 university teachers in north part of Jiangsu province from the perspective of humanism and found that the interference of work to families and vice versa were negatively correlated with life quality of teachers, that is, the high level of interference of work to family and family to work will generate relatively low satisfaction for life, career development and work.[5]

3. Framework of Action System for Female Teachers in Institutions of Higher Learning

The theory of action system, represented by Parsons, is a school of sociological theory that emerged in the 1960s, which insisted that individual actors have a stable relationship with the system, and individuals took a series of adaptive actions for survival and development in a system. The action system consists of four sub-systems: culture system, social system, personality system and behavioral organism. [6] The action option and action results of the actor subject are restricted by the other three subsystems, and the initiative of the actor subject in turn constructs the other three subsystems. From the perspective of action system, the career development of female teachers in

colleges and universities can be discussed from the following four aspects [7] :

3.1 The Occupational Adaptation Action of Female Teachers in Colleges and Universities as the Main Actor

The promotion of academic qualification is an important part in self-construction of teachers in universities and colleges, which has become the first choice for female teachers in colleges and universities to adapt to their careers. In terms of the educational structure of certain university, 685 teachers were qualified with doctorates, among which 390 were male and 295 were female accounting for 43.7%. There were 185 male with master degree and 232 female with master degree accounting for 55.64%. The challenge for female teachers to upgrade from master's degree to doctor's degree is much higher than that of male teachers. For unmarried female teachers, studying for a doctor's degree may bring difficulty in choosing a spouse; for married female teachers without children, studying for a doctor's degree may delay the childbearing age. For married female teachers with children, the chance of applying for a doctor's degree is greatly reduced [8]. Therefore, the plight of female teachers in career adaptation can be seen from the perspective of improving their academic qualifications.

Evaluation for professional titles is another action in professional adaptation of female teachers in colleges and universities. In terms of the title structure of certain university, there were 195 male teachers with professors or other senior professional titles and 57 female teachers accounting for 22.62%. There were 238 male teachers with associate professors or other associate senior professional titles, 200 of whom were female accounting for 45.66%. There were 289 male teachers with lecturer or other intermediate professional titles and there were 330 female teachers with the above mentioned professional titles accounting for 53.31% of all teachers. Achievements in scientific research are an important evaluation index in the professional title evaluation system for university teachers [9].

3.2 Influence of the Role of Female Teachers in Universities and Colleges on Career Development

Female teachers in colleges and universities are subject to two different role norms in academic field and family and they must accept the value evaluation in the two fields respectively. The role of female teachers in academy requires female teachers to devote their time and energy to activities in higher education to achieve more academic achievements. The role and norms of female teachers in family require them to abide by the traditional feminine characteristics, to work diligently and be willing for contribution. Besides, female teachers were expected to place their personal value of life on their husbands and children. The academic role of female teachers requires them to constantly improve their academic qualifications, promote professional titles and pay close attention to the cutting-edge issues in their teaching activities and scientific research, that is, to pay close attention to their self-development so as to shoulder the academic burden bravely. The family role of female teachers in colleges and universities requires them to create a warm harbor for their family members endlessly. The academic role requires female teachers to be independent, bold, innovative, independent, and inquisitive. The family role of female teachers in universities and colleges requires them to be meek, elegant, and patient and devoted for their family [10].

3.3 Influence of Female Cognition in Social Value System on Career Development of Female Teachers in Colleges and Universities

In China, the gender cognition for male and female constitutes an important social value system for the career development of female teachers in colleges and universities. According to the survey on social status of Chinese women (2011), 61.6 percent of men and 54.8 percent of women agreed with the view that "men should give priority to society while women should pay close attention to family". Women shoulder more family responsibilities than men, but when there was a conflict between career development and family, women were more expected to give up work for the family, and as a result, their work initiative and enthusiasm gradually decreased. Gender culture and the long-term influence of traditional culture have led to unfavorable "cultural support" to women in

career development and the expectations were significantly lower than that of men in career development.

3.4 The Influence of Organizational System and Environment on the Career Development of Female Teachers in Career Development

The phenomenon of "glass ceiling" is a hot topic in the research on female career development in the school of organizational behavior. The "glass ceiling" refers to the fact that females were placed in a subordinate position in career development by working organizational mechanism in patriarchy, which had deeply affected all aspects of differences in working of both genders. Besides, it was potentially accepted by people and thus becoming the transparent "glass ceiling".

4. Path Selection for Career Development of Female Teachers in Universities and Colleges

First of all, female teachers in universities and colleges should do their best to enrich and improve themselves and to make themselves optimized to the greatest extent in terms of academic qualifications, academics and international vision to enhance their competitiveness. Under the circumstance that performance of teachers was mainly measured by teaching level and ability in scientific research, the improvement of comprehensive quality and academic level of female teachers becomes the prerequisite for them to keep a foothold in universities. Therefore, female teachers must seize the opportunity, expand knowledge, enhance strength, expand consciousness and clarify goals to achieve the comprehensive improvement in learning, teaching and scientific research. By doing so, they can keep pace with the knowledge based society and not to be abandoned by the times and the society as a whole.

Secondly, the effective incentive mechanism is an effective measure to promote self-initiative and self-improvement of female teachers in universities and colleges. The phases of career of female teachers and the specific conditions should be taken into consideration to establish reasonable, effective and targeted incentives. The analysis on different mentalities and demands at different stage should be made to systematically carry out instruction and encouragement for female teachers to mobilize the passion and power to the maximum extent. Finally, the common goal for career development can be achieved in the process of mutual assistance.

Once again, the construction of harmonious cultural cognition system is the social support and guarantee for the female teachers in colleges and universities. The gender difference in the traditional cognition in domestic division of labor should be broken to set up the correct occupation concept of male and female to de-label the role cognition of females with high education, high income and high status.

Above said, the "shackled" dance under the "glass ceiling" should not be the career development path of female teachers in colleges and universities. Through individual efforts, improvement of organizational system and social and cultural construction, such group can be changed for all-round development.

References

- [1] Yang Xuemei. Survey on the quality of presidents of Chinese universities [N]. People's Daily.2007-08-24(4).
- [2] Liu Yueping, Guo Shumei. Investigation on barriers of career development of female teachers in colleges and universities from the perspective of social gender [J]. Contemporary Teacher Education, 2012 (12).
- [3] Li Oumei, Jing Shaoli, Guo Aimei. Cooperative development of female teachers in colleges and universities from the perspective of eco-feminism [J]. Journal of China Women's University.2015 (6).
- [4] Deng Zijuan. Research on career development of female teachers in local universities -- A case study of H universities in northern Jiangsu [J]. Journal of China Women's University.2012 (6).

- [5] Jia Chunzeng. History of Foreign Sociology [M]. Beijing: China Renmin University Press.2002.
- [6] Zhai Shiting. Study on career confidence of female teachers in middle schools and its Influencing factors [D]. Hunan University, 2019.
- [7] Wang Ping. Role expectation and career development dilemma of female teachers in colleges and universities [J]. Editorial Department of Journal of Chifeng University (natural science edition), 2015, 31(18):259-261.
- [8] Zhu Bangxiang. Review of research on job satisfaction of university teachers [J]. Science & Technology Vision, 2015(23):45+71.
- [9] Shen Hong, Xiong Junfeng. Occupational gender segregation and gender difference in college teachers' income [J].Research on Higher Education, 2014, 35(03):25-33.
- [10] Qiao Cheng,Lin Lihua.Analysis on career development of female teachers in colleges and universities[J],2012(10):137-138.